# MARINE CORPS DOCTRINAL PUBLICATION (MCDP) 1
## DISCUSSION:  PART II
## FACULTY SPOOL GUIDE

## 1.  Purpose and Overview
This seminar introduces the second half of the principal Marine Corps doctrinal publication in a seminar setting and explores its impact on the tactical and operational functions of the MAGTF. The focus is on preparing for war and the conduct of war.

## 2.  Method
Read MCDP 1 and discuss the doctrine in a seminar with the students.

## 3.  Endstate
The students should conclude the seminar with a firm foundation in this pivotal Marine Corps doctrine that emphasizes the nature, theory, preparation, and conduct of war.

## 3.  References

   a.  MCDP 1, *Warfighting*
   b.  MCWP 5-1, *Marine Corps Planning Process (MCPP)*
   c.  Joint Pub 1-02, *DoD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*
   d.  Strange, Dr. Joe. *Perspectives on Warfighting*. Number Four, Second Edition, MCU.

## 4.  Faculty Requirements

   Read

   a.  MCDP 1, *Warfighting* (pp. 3-4)
   b.  MCWP 5-1, *Marine Corps Planning Process* (pp. 2-2 to 2-4)

   Review

   a.  *On War*
   b.  *Perspectives on Warfighting*, Chapter 4, "Centers of Gravity and Critical Vulnerabilities: Building on the Clausewitzian Foundation So That We Can All Speak the Same Language." Scan the preface and chapter 1.

## 5.  Issues for Consideration

   **a.  Are we currently fostering boldness and initiative in our leaders? How might you encourage the development of these characteristics in your subordinates? Where on the spectrum should the emphasis in our training focus? Are we preparing for the most likely conflict?**

   The EWS faculty does not have any specific answers in mind for these questions. It is important for the students to move from theory and philosophy into the realm of practicality.

Most students will be assuming command of some sort of unit within the next year, and this is a good time for them to begin thinking about the implementation of our philosophy of war. Below are some topics to consider introducing into the seminar:

(1) Zero defects versus MCDP 1.
(2) Augmentation for lieutenants versus zero defects.

When conducting performance evaluation counseling or writing fitness reports, are you rewarding those who display boldness and initiative? Should the Marine Corps concentrate on TDEs that focus on thinking and decentralized training?

Commanders have the responsibility to balance the development of bold, innovative "thinking" leaders. Being able to explain the reasoning that led to your decision is a key element to growth as a "thinking" leader. We must recognize that errors by junior leaders stemming from excessive boldness are a necessary part of learning. Depending on the junior leader's stage of development and ability to explain the rationale behind the decision, these errors should be dealt with leniently. However, just as we should deal severely with errors of inaction or timidity, commanders must not encourage "bold" actions that clearly demonstrate a lack of serious analysis or forethought.

**b. Where on the spectrum should the emphasis in our training focus?**

The Marine Corps, as the nation's force in readiness, must have the versatility and flexibility to deal with military and paramilitary situations across the entire spectrum of conflict. This is a greater challenge than it may appear; conflicts of low intensity are not simply lesser forms of high-intensity war. A modern force capable of waging a war of high intensity may find itself ill prepared for a "small" war against a poorly equipped guerrilla force.

**c. Are we preparing for the most likely conflict?**

(1) Our educational system and the operating forces are not devoted to preparing for all levels of conflict.

(2) We now have MEF campaign plans that help emphasize our commitments to areas that are likely arenas for low-intensity conflict. Additionally, our professional journals and educational system have begun focusing more attention on peacetime engagement and lesser regional contingencies.

(3) We probably should tie our training efforts to the national military strategy and the warfighting and campaign plans of the combatant commanders.

**d. As a leader, what is your responsibility with regard to professional military education? (pp. 61-64)**

(1) Professional military education is designed to develop creative, thinking leaders.

(2) Keep in mind that the responsibility for implementing professional military education resides not only with the education establishment but also with the commander and the individual Marine.

(3) Commanders should consider the professional development of their subordinates a principal responsibility of command.

(4) Commanders are expected to conduct a continuing professional education program for their subordinates that includes developing military judgment and decision-making and teaches general professional subjects and specific technical subjects pertinent to occupational specialties.

(5) Self-study in the art and science of war is at least equal in importance to maintaining physical condition—and it should receive at least equal time.

(6) A leader without either interest in or knowledge of the history and theory of warfare—the intellectual content of his profession—is a leader in appearance only.

**How will you fulfill this responsibility for professional development?**
Useful tools for general professional development include supervised reading programs, map exercises, war games, battle studies, terrain studies, staff rides, historical battlefield tours, and guided discussions of books or specific topics.

e. **What requirements does maneuver warfare place on our philosophy of command? (pp. 78-82)**

The answer to this question can be found throughout MCDP 1. These requirements include

(1) decentralized command and control.
(2) clear understanding of the commander's intent.
(3) the use of mission tactics.
(4) study and analysis based on human characteristics rather than on equipment and procedures.
(5) exploitation of our ability to communicated implicitly.
(6) commanding from well forward.
(7) mental preparedness to thrive in an environment of chaos, uncertainty, constant change, and friction.
(8) not striving for certainty before we act or make a decision.
(9) not trying to maintain positive control over subordinates.
(10) not attempting to impose precise order to the events of combat.
(11) being prepared to adapt to changing circumstances and exploit opportunities as they arise.
(12) competent leadership at all levels.
(13) initiative, an essential condition of competence among commanders.
(14) practice during both training and preparation for war as well as during war.
(15) confidence among seniors and subordinates.

f. **How is the MAGTF unique among the other military services in conducting operations?**

Have fun running with this one. You will get a good discussion going among your Marines. Try to pull your information management officers (IMOs), if available, into this question and solicit how they are organized. Below are a few operational concepts unique to the MAGTF:

(1) The ground combat element (GCE), aviation combat element (ACE), and combat service support element (CSSE) deploy together and, in most cases, train together under one commander.

(2) The single battle concept is unique to the MAGTF.

(3) Marine air apportionment and allocation practices and procedures are unique to the MAGTF.

g. **What is the relationship of courage to fear? What are the methods used to overcome fear? "Leaders must study fear." Should we study courage instead? (pp. 13-17, 78-82)**

(1) Recognize that violence and danger are fundamental characteristics of war and that the human reaction to danger is fear. Any view of the nature of war would hardly be accurate or complete without consideration of the effects of danger, fear, exhaustion, and privation on the men who must do the fighting.

(2) Since fear has a significant impact on the conduct of war, <u>leadership must foster the courage to overcome fear, both individually and within the unit. Courage is not the absence of fear; it is the strength to overcome fear</u>.

(3) In order to overcome fear, commanders should

   (a) lead from the front.

   (b) introduce stress during training.

   (c) adopt physical conditioning programs to build endurance and confidence.

   (d) build confidence in individuals and units through realistic training (live fire and adverse conditions) and MOS credibility.

   (e) promote the study of personal accounts of those who have excelled in war.

(4) It is the leader's responsibility to study fear, understand it, and be prepared to cope with it, both individually and within the unit.

h. **What elements are necessary to employ a doctrine of arms?**

We must thoroughly understand the capabilities and limitations of each arm. There must be cooperation among the different arms in supporting each other and when developing specific doctrine, tactics, techniques, and procedures. We must train as a combined arms force. Effective training will lead to a greater understanding among the arms as to the capabilities and limitations of each.

i. **Why designate a main effort?**

The main effort is the commander's bid for success. It is appropriately weighted with combat power and is supported by the other units in the command to help ensure its success.

Generally, during PEs and exercises, the students will shift the main effort as often as they do phases. It should be explained to them that each phase of an operation does not

need a main effort as long as the designated main effort accomplishes the overall mission and all other efforts support that end. On the other hand, the main effort can shift to exploit success either by design or "on the fly." There is a difference between main effort and main attack.

One final point is to ensure the students understand that the main effort does not need priority of fires all the time. If the main effort is to be committed in the third phase of a three-phased attack, it may not need to have the priority until the supporting efforts have completed their tasks.

**j.  Why is a well articulated commander's intent important?**
Give PowerPoint class.

**k.  What are the elements of a commander's intent?**
Give PowerPoint class.

## 6.  Additional Questions to Consider

a.  Is war an art or a science? Why?

b.  Compare and contrast maneuver warfare and attrition warfare styles.

c.  Why is the defense the inherently stronger form of warfare?

d.  From what sources does MCDP 1 draw most heavily?

e.  Compare speed and focus to characteristics of maneuver warfare?

f.  Do you believe self-study of the art and science of warfare is at least equal in importance to maintaining physical condition—and should receive at least equal time? Is that what we practice?

g.  Does our assignment policy support developing tactical experts? Will PME overcome any shortcomings?

h.  Based on what is stated in MCDP 1, what is your understanding of centers of gravity (COGs) and critical vulnerabilities (CVs)? Do COGs exist at the tactical level?